

Union Street

Conservation Area Appraisal

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Union Street Conservation Area

1. Introduction

1.1. The Conservation Area Appraisal: Purpose

- 1.1.1. The purpose of this statement is to provide both an account of Union Street Conservation Area and a clear indication of the Borough Council's approach to its preservation and enhancement. It is intended to assist and guide all those involved in development and change in the area, and will be used by the Council in assessing the design of development proposals.
- 1.1.2. The statutory definition of a Conservation Area is an "area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance." Conservation Areas are normally centred on listed buildings and pleasant groups of other buildings, open space, or an historic street pattern. A town space or features of archaeological interest may also contribute to the special character of an area. It is, however, the character of an area, rather than individual buildings, that such a designation seeks to preserve or enhance. The most recent legislation dealing with Conservation Areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 (Sections 69 to 78). Guidance to the legislation is given in Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment' (PPS 5) and the related Historic Environment Planning Practice Guidance, published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in March 2010.
- 1.1.3. Planning legislation requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In doing this the emphasis will be on control rather than prevention, to allow the area to remain alive and prosperous but at the same time to ensure that any new development accords with its special architectural and visual qualities.
- 1.1.4. This statement has been prepared following guidance given by English Heritage in their note "Conservation Area Appraisals".

1.2. Arrangement of this document

- 1.2.1. Following the Introduction, Section 2 provides a brief history of the area and its development. Section 3 starts with a broad appraisal of its character and appearance, with reference to the range of materials, details and building types to be found in the area. Section 3 then goes on to describe the area with specific reference to architectural and historic qualities, views and townscape, the character and relationship of public and green spaces, and any elements that detract from the Conservation Area. Section 4 provides an audit of the features of special interest of the area, including listed buildings, particular groups of unlisted buildings, and trees, planting and other streetscape elements. Section 5 provides guidelines for future management and change in the conservation area.

1.3. Union Street Conservation Area

1.4. Location

- 1.4.1. As the name implies, the Union Street Conservation Area is based on Union Street and Southwark Bridge Road, which respectively run east-west and north-south through the area. It is adjacent to two other conservation areas – Thrale Street to the north and Borough High Street to the east.
- 1.4.2. The conservation area covers an area of approximately 4.6ha. It is a mixed area of predominantly nineteenth century commercial, industrial warehousing, social housing and ecclesiastical development situated half a kilometre south of the river Thames. The conservation area is mainly within the parish of St Saviour. The surrounding area is known locally as “The Borough” and is part of the London Borough of Southwark.
- 1.4.3. The majority of the Conservation Area falls within an Archaeological Priority Zone. Within this area the Council will seek to conserve and protect the Borough’s Archaeological heritage and enhance the understanding of its historical development.

1.5. Planning History

- 1.5.1. Union Street Conservation Area was originally designated in May 2000 under the Civic Amenities Act 1967.

1.6. Unitary Development Plan Policies

- 1.6.1. The Development Plan for Southwark is the Southwark Plan (UDP) July 2007, which was adopted by the Council on 28 July 2007, superseding the Unitary Development Plan adopted in 1995. The new Plan contains the following policies relating to Conservation Areas.

Policy 3.15 – Conservation of the Historic Environment

Development should preserve or enhance the special interest or historic character or appearance of buildings or areas of historical or architectural significance. Planning proposals that will have an adverse effect on the historic environment will not be permitted.

The character and appearance of Conservation Areas should be recognised and respected in any new development within these areas. Article 4 directions may be imposed to limit permitted development rights, particularly in residential areas.

In this policy the term historic environment includes Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected London Squares, historic parks and gardens and trees that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, trees that contribute to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area and ancient hedgerows.

Policy 3.16 – Conservation Areas

Within Conservation Areas development should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

New Development, including Alterations and Extensions

Planning permission will be granted for new development, including the extension or alteration of existing buildings provided that the proposals:

- *Respect the context of the Conservation Area, having regard to the content of Conservation Area Appraisals and other adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents; and*
- *Use high quality materials that complement and enhance the Conservation Area; and*
- *Do not involve the loss of existing traditional features of interest which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area; and*
- *Do not introduce design details or features that are out of character with the area, such as the use of windows and doors made of aluminium or UPVC or other non-traditional materials.*

Where appropriate development in Conservation Areas may include the use of modern materials or innovative techniques only where it can be demonstrated in a design and access statement that this will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Demolition

Within Conservation Areas, there will be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings that contribute positively to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Planning permission will not be granted for proposals that involve the demolition or substantial demolition of a building that contributes positively to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, unless, in accordance with PPG 15 or any subsequent amendments, it can be demonstrated that:

- *Costs of repairs and maintenance would not be justified, when assessed against the importance of the building and the value derived from its continued use, provided that the building has not been deliberately neglected; and*
- *Real efforts have been made to continue the current use or find a viable alternative use for the building; and*
- *There will be substantial planning benefits for the community from redevelopment which would decisively outweigh loss from the resulting demolition; and*
- *The replacement development will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and has been granted planning permission.*

Implementation

Submission of details demonstrating that a contract for the construction of the replacement development has been let will be required prior to implementation of the development.

Policy 3.18 – Setting of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites

Permission will not be granted for developments that would not preserve or enhance:

- *The immediate or wider setting of a listed building; or*
- *An important view(s) of a listed building; or*
- *The setting of a Conservation Area; or*
- *Views into or out of a Conservation Area; or*
- *The setting of a World Heritage Site; or*
- *Important views of or from a World Heritage Site.*

1.7. PPS5: Planning and the Historic Environment

Introduction

1.7.1. Planning Policy statements set out the Government's national policies on different aspects of spatial planning in England. PPS5 sets out the planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment. The policies in PPS5 are a material consideration which must be taken into account in development management decisions where relevant.

1.7.2. PPS5 sets out that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are called heritage assets. Some heritage assets possess a level of interest that justifies designation and particular procedures apply to decisions that involve them. Designated assets are:

- World Heritage Sites;
- Scheduled monuments;
- Listed Buildings;
- Protected wreck sites;
- Conservation Area;
- Registered Parks and Gardens;
- Registered battlefields.

1.7.3. PPS5 also covers heritage assets that are not designated but which are of heritage interest and thus a material planning consideration.

1.7.4. Guidance to help practitioners implement these policies, including the legislative requirements that underpin it, is provided in Planning for the Historic Environment practice Guide. The policies and guidance under PPG15 have now been replaced by this PPS5 and the Practice Guidance.

The Policies

1.7.5. The value of the historic environment, and the contribution it makes to our cultural, social and economic life, is set out in the Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010. PPS5 comprises policies that will enable the Government's vision for the historic environment as set out in this statement to be implemented through the planning system.

1.7.6. The relevant policies to this designated heritage asset are set out below:

- Policy HE1: Heritage Assets and climate change;
- Policy HE2: Evidence base for plan-making;
- Policy HE3: Regional and local planning approaches;
- Policy HE4: Permitted development and article 4 directions;
- Policy HE5: Monitoring indicators;
- Policy HE6: Information requirements for applications for consent affecting heritage assets;
- Policy HE7: Policy principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to all heritage assets;
- Policy HE8: Additional policy principle guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to heritage assets that are not covered by policy HE 9;
- Policy HE9: Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to designated heritage assets;
- Policy HE10: Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset;
- Policy HE11: Enabling Development;
- Policy HE12: Policy principles guiding the recording of information related to heritage assets.

1.8. Further Information

1.8.1. This document is not exhaustive, and further advice and information can be obtained from the Planning Department, London Borough of Southwark.

1.8.2. Information on the Southwark Plan, including electronic versions of the plan and supplementary planning guidance, can be found on the Council's web site at www.southwark.gov.uk.

2. Historical Background

2.1. General

- 2.1.1. The natural topography of north Southwark comprises a number of high sand and gravel islands or eyots, which existed along the riverside in the prehistoric period. Several of these islands have been located through archaeological investigations. One of these is in the area of the easternmost part of Union Street.
- 2.1.2. Prehistoric occupation of these islands is supported by archaeological investigations. Fieldwork in the Union Street area has so far revealed isolated prehistoric finds, but no definite evidence of settlement or associated activity.
- 2.1.3. The Conservation Area is near the line of the ancient route of Roman Stane Street which culminated at London Bridge - the only bridge across the Thames at that time. It is thought that Roman occupation extended as far west as Southwark Bridge Road.
- 2.1.4. After the Romans the area was abandoned and it is thought to have been used as market gardens.
- 2.1.5. The 17th century maps show buildings on the line of Borough High Street with gardens and orchards at the rear. Union Street was a significant east west route parallel to the river, whilst Redcross Way was the main north south route through the area.
- 2.1.6. The 18th century maps show pedestrian links between Red Cross Street and Borough High Street but Union Street was not established. St Saviours burial ground was one of many unconsecrated burial grounds in the wider area on the corner of Redcross way and Union Street.
- 2.1.7. The eastern end of Union Street was opened in 1781 following the passing of an Act of Parliament. Queen Street and its continuation Duke Street were renamed as Union Street in 1813.
- 2.1.8. The 19th century saw changes to the area through the building of Southwark Bridge and Southwark Bridge Road in 1819. At the junction of Union Street and Southwark Bridge Road a triangular space, now Flat Iron Square was formed. The map appears to indicate trees planted within the centre of the space at this time.
- 2.1.9. The construction of the South Eastern Railway between London Bridge and Charring Cross in early 1860's represented a second major interruption to the urban fabric.
- 2.1.10. Between 1872 and 1910 there were a number of notable buildings built in the area:
 - Welsh Congregational Church in 1872
 - Church of the Most Precious Blood in 1892
 - Redcross Gardens and cottages following Octavia Hill in 1890
 - Winchester Cottages in Copperfield Street by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1893
 - All Hallows Church in 1879
 - Warehouse on Redcross Street in the 1890s.

- Tramways on Southwark Bridge Road in 1893
- Public Library, Southwark Bridge Road in 1893
- St. Saviour's Parochial and National Schools on Union Street in 1908

The area has never really reached this level of building activity and regeneration since.



Welsh Congregational Church, Southwark Bridge Road



Winchester Cottages, Copperfield Street

3. The Character and Appearance of the Area

3.1. Urban Morphology, Prevailing and Former Uses

- 3.1.1. As the area developed through the mid seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a gridiron street pattern began to emerge, much of which remains today. The linear form of domestic terraced development along these streets with gardens and orchards to the area contrasts with the densely developed long narrow yards and inns that had evolved perpendicular to Borough High Street. The narrow width of streets such as Redcross Way, Great Guildford Street and Union Street reflects the age of these streets.
- 3.1.2. With an increase in the population in the area in the eighteenth century the density of the development continued to increase with the formation of new terraces, squares and courtyards. Southwark Bridge Road was superimposed on the street pattern in the early nineteenth century to provide a link to the new bridge and development infilled the gaps created by its construction thus creating a new frontage to the new street. The incursion of the railway in the 1860s and the formation of the Marshalsea Road towards the close of the century completed the evolution of the current street pattern.
- 3.1.3. A dense grain of workers houses, yards, and warehouses connected with surrounding industry and other uses built up through the middle of the nineteenth century. The tiny plots, lack of open space, in the form of either public or private gardens, indicate the poverty of the area at that time. It is in the latter part of the century and the first years of the twentieth century that the impact of the social reformers can be seen, with the development of philanthropic housing (most notably Redcross Cottages and Gardens), new schools, churches and a public library.
- 3.1.4. The dense grain of small buildings has, in part been eroded since the Second World War. As redevelopment occurred, larger blocks, occupied by single uses, replaced the Georgian and Victorian houses, shops and warehouses. This is particularly evident in the area between Ayres Street and Southwark Bridge Road. The impact of this has tended to reduce the sense of enclosure to the streets. The replacement of Evelina Hospital and the buildings on the junction of Marshalsea Road and Southwark Bridge Road and creation of Mint Street Gardens have opened up views to the south.
- 3.1.5. The London Street Directories (for example 1893, 1912 and 1941) highlight the wide variety of small businesses that occupied the properties on Union Street and Southwark Bridge Road during this period.

	
Redcross Cottages	Railway viaduct

The setting of the Conservation Area

3.1.6. The northern boundary of the area is formed by the railway viaduct, which acts as a barrier, dividing the area from the busy thoroughfare of Southwark Street, this aspect being dominated by the adjacent viaduct and busy road. Southwark Street, in contrast to the Conservation Area, is generally of much larger scale and is predominantly commercial in nature.

3.1.7. The areas adjoining the eastern edge of the Conservation Area vary in character. To the east of the gap site, north of Union Street, are four storey early nineteenth century warehouse buildings fronting long narrow yards; a remnant of the pattern of burgage plots that characterised development along Borough High Street. Along the southern part of Redcross Way, the tight, historic grain that is evident within the Conservation Area has been disrupted by post-war interventions. The single storey prefabricated primary school buildings opposite Redcross Gardens gives a relatively open aspect whilst to the south of Redcross Gardens, the five storey utilitarian block of flats is in stark contrast to the two storey cottages and hall.

3.1.8. Flanking Marshalsea Road on the approach from the south-east are purpose built flats of a larger scale and differing character to the development within the study area. The London Fire Brigade Headquarters, built in 1777 as a workhouse and later converted to a hat 'manufactory', is a major building on Southwark Bridge Road to the south of the study area. It was extended in 1878 and 1911 in response to the needs of the Fire Brigade. Unlike the generally tight grained streets and more modest buildings that characterise the area to the north, this listed building has a classically influenced frontage with iconic columns, set back from Southwark Bridge Road within its own grounds. The openness of this frontage combined with Mint Street Gardens, which also have a frontage onto Marshalsea Road is in direct contrast to the enclosure of the streets and spaces that is the prominent characteristic of the study area.

3.2. Materials and Details

Buildings

- 3.2.1. The buildings in the area are in general utilitarian, and modest in their scale and detailing. The predominant building material in the area is the local London stock brick. Many of the later Victorian philanthropic housing, schools and ecclesiastical buildings have red string courses, heads and quoins, and rosemary tiles to add visual interest.
- 3.2.2. The turn of the century warehouse and commercial buildings introduce red brick buildings with stone detailing, glazed bricks and blue engineering brick reflecting the fact that alternative material sources were becoming more widely available at this time.
- 3.2.3. A number of original shop fronts appear to remain, at least in part. The most notable example is the restored nineteenth century shop front at 57-61 Union Street. There are elements of Victorian shop fronts remaining on the southern side of the Flat Iron Square. Other examples include 88 to 92 Southwark Bridge Road, which appear to retain the original scrolls, pilasters, fascia boards and openings. 137 Southwark Bridge Road retains scrolls, pilasters, cornice and fascia board.
- 3.2.4. The warehouse buildings at 60-66 Southwark Bridge Road have decorative panels between the windows. These are repeated on the slightly later warehouse buildings at 37-39 Great Guildford Street.
- 3.2.5. Various crane jibs remain on the side of the warehouse buildings that serve as a reminder of their former use. Some examples of where these can be seen are the warehouses on Redcross Way, on Ayres Street, and Great Guildford Street.



57-61 Union Street



37-39 Great Guildford Street

Streetscape – Surfacing

3.2.6. In terms of streetscape, little of the nineteenth century surfacing is visible. The location of types of elements that are visible are outlined below.

- Southern end of Pepper Street – part setted carriageway
- Passage, to the north of Redcross Cottages – surfaced in York stone paving flags

Streetscape – Street furniture

3.2.7. A number of cast iron bollards can be seen around the area, which are assumed to date from the nineteenth century. Examples of these can be seen in the following locations.

- South-east corner of Pepper Street and Copperfield Street – A bollard with ‘Clink 1812’ inscribed on it, presumed to be one of 60 cast iron posts made by Messers Bishop & Co made for the Clink Paving Company Commissioners. There is another example on the north-east corner of Pepper Street which is listed.
- Either side of the access crossover on the northern side of Flat Iron Square.
- Outside the former library on the Corner of Southwark Bridge Road and Union Street.

3.3. Sub Area 1 – Redcross Gardens

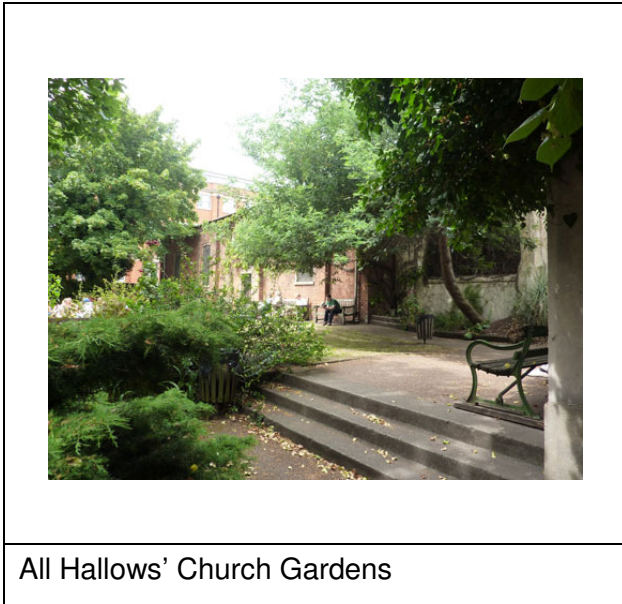
3.3.1. Redcross Gardens was laid out at the same time as the construction of Redcross Cottages in 1887, but the original landscaping, which incorporated a pond, does not survive. The Survey of London (1950) suggests that the garden was designed by “Julie, Countess of Ducie and others”. Cherry and Pevsner (1983) credit the Gardens’ design to Emmeline Sieveking. The provision of the small communal garden was significant in that it reflected the concerns about ill-health and overcrowding and the benefits off fresh air. The design was informal, in the manner of the cottage garden.

3.3.2. The gardens are accessed either from Redcross Way via an original double gate, or a narrow passage to the north of the cottages leading from Ayres Street. The original railings next to the cottages remain around the periphery. A round mosaic plaque, showing a figure sowing seeds and the inscription ‘the sower went forth to sow’, originally erected by Octavia Hill, was reinstated by the Horace Street Trust in 1956. The garden recently benefitted from a regeneration scheme which aimed to emulate the original design, reinstating the pond and informal soft landscaping.



3.4. Sub Area 2 – All Hallows Church Gardens

3.4.1. This small, rectangular garden is an incidental rather than planned space, created as a result of war-time bomb damage to the church. The space is enclosed on the northern side by the reconstructed side of a later church and by a wall and vegetation to the south and west. The buttressed wall on the corner of Copperfield Street and Pepper Street that once formed an entrance into the church is retained and provides some enclosure to the street. The garden is entered up a couple of steps via a gate from Copperfield Street. Winchester Cottages overlook this quiet, pleasant space.



3.5. Sub Area 3 – Flat Iron Square

3.5.1. Flat Iron Square is a triangular urban space at the junction of Union Street and Southwark Bridge Road created in the early nineteenth century when Southwark Bridge Road was constructed and the junction with Union Street formed.

3.5.2. A terrace of six, three storey nineteenth century houses (69-79 Union Street) with ground floor shops encloses the southern edge of the space. These have two bays each and retain a rhythm of vertically proportioned windows on the upper floors. A few of the original sash windows remain, and a large archway has been formed to gain access to the rear. Adjacent to this is a four storey, red brick, turn of the century commercial building that terminates the street at the junction with Southwark Bridge Road.

3.5.3. The northern edge of the space is dominated by the railway viaduct with its large brick abutment supporting the bridge over Southwark Bridge Road. A two storey, turn of the century building (66-68 Union Street) with a triangular footprint infills the gap between the viaduct and the two three storey houses with shops (62-64 Union Street), the remainder of a terrace of properties dating from 1835, now undergoing refurbishment.

- 3.5.4. In the centre of the triangular traffic island within the space are two mature London Plane trees which provide an attractive focal point along Union Street and a pleasant counterpoint to the densely developed urban environment. The square will shortly benefit from a regeneration scheme, which aims to provide a shared space that will upgrade the public realm whilst retaining access to pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.
- 3.5.5. Human activity within the square focuses on a small cafe (a converted inter-war brick-built block of public conveniences with hipped rosemary tiled roof which replaced the Victorian drinking fountain) and the shops on the southern edge.



Flat Iron Square

3.6. Sub Area 4 – Union Street

- 3.6.1. Union Street is a relatively quiet, narrower street with a sense of enclosure created by the predominantly three storey buildings set at the back edge of the pavement. Flat Iron Square and the trees within it, form a focal point at the western end of this section of the street.
- 3.6.2. The street has a varied character deriving from the differing ages and types of buildings along its length. The three storey early-mid nineteenth century terraces at either end of the street are more domestic in size and scale compared to the larger and more decorative later nineteenth century community buildings around the junction of Union Street with Redcross Way. St. Saviours House, with its larger windows and differing elevational treatment provides a focal point at this junction.
- 3.6.3. There is however, generally a degree of continuity in the repetition and rhythm of vertically proportioned windows along the street. Properties within the street are predominantly parapet-fronted, a few have mansard roofs. Despite some variation in the numbers of storeys of the buildings in the street there is consistency in the heights of the buildings at parapet/eaves level.



Union Street

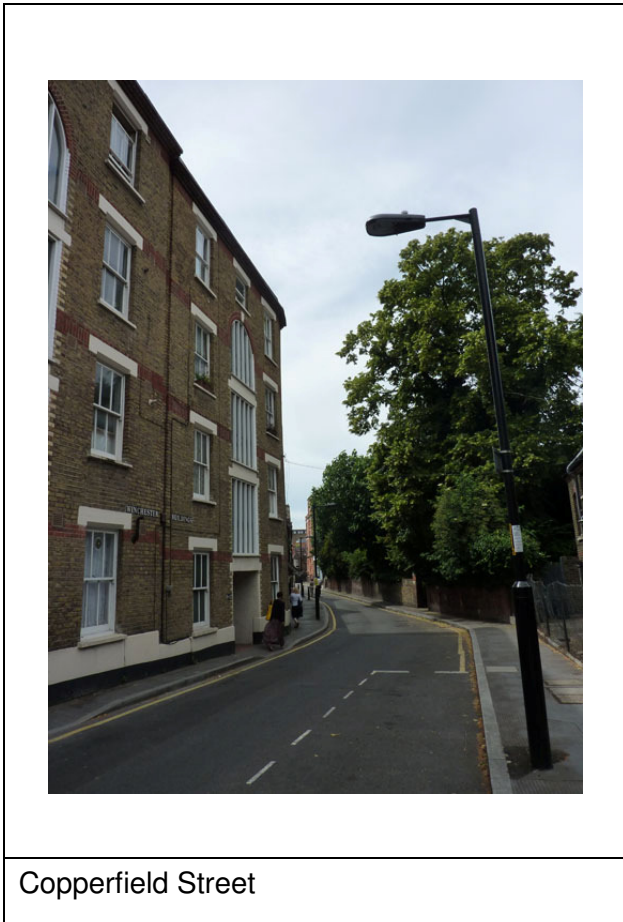
3.7. Sub Area 5 – Southwark Bridge Road

- 3.7.1. The later nineteenth century terraced houses, either side of the Welsh Congregational Chapel form an attractive grouping and focal point on the slight bend in the road. Victorian shop fronts in the end units remain largely intact.
- 3.7.2. The consistency of mid-nineteenth century terraces that follow the bend on the western side of Southwark Bridge Road derives from the alignment of roofline parapets and cornices, storey heights and repetition of vertical fenestration. These terraced properties terminate the view from Marshalsea Road. The truncated terrace of four houses south of the junction with Marshalsea Road is of a similar period and has similar proportions. These are prominent when viewed travelling south along Southwark Bridge Road.
- 3.7.3. Further north along Southwark Bridge Road the building scale increases and the treatment of these properties became more decorative. This group, which includes the former public library, Bricklayer's Society Hall and adjacent warehouse (Nos. 60 to 66), are up to four stories in height but maintain a consistent parapet/eaves level. The former library building is a landmark building along Southwark Bridge Road at the junction with Union Street.
- 3.7.4. The buildings along Southwark Street are located predominantly at the back of the pavement, which provides a sense of enclosure to the street.



3.8. Sub Area 6 - Copperfield Street

3.8.1. Copperfield Street is a narrow, peaceful residential street. Winchester Cottages, at the western end of the street, are set at the back of the narrow footway, facing All Hallow's Church garden. The small scale of these two storey cottages contrasts with the scale of the surrounding development including the adjacent four storey flats (Winchester Buildings) which are of similar age but of different scale and character. The Arts and Crafts influence on the cottages is reflected to a degree in the later Church Hall and Vicarage at the eastern end of the street. Buff stock bricks with red brick detailing are a common theme of the buildings in the street.



3.9. Sub Area 7 - Redcross Way (between Union Street and Southwark Street)

3.9.1. The northern section of Redcross Way is a narrow, quiet street. The remaining buildings comprise a late nineteenth century, three storey, red brick warehouse building and the presbytery to the Catholic Church. These are set at the back of the narrow footpaths and provide enclosure to the street. A corner four storey tower to the presbytery provides a focal point to this block, which has a strong vertical emphasis in its fenestration and elevational treatment. The mature London Plane tree on the corner is important in the street scene when viewed looking along Redcross Way and Union Street.



3.10. Negative elements

The key buildings and sites that detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are listed below and the main problems noted.

3.10.1. The petrol station on Southwark Bridge Road and flats at 11-29 Ayres Street

- Provide an unattractive focal point on approach from the south at the junction with Marshalsea Road;
- Detract from the setting of the listed cottages as a result of the untidy rear fencing and tanks;
- Create an open frontage through which the plain red brick flank of the adjacent modern industrial units is visible;
- Present a poor, undefined frontage to adjacent roads.

3.10.2. The tyre-fitting garage on the corner of Union Street and Great Guildford Street

- Is an unattractive use on the edge of the conservation area
- Has an open storage of tyres on the site;
- Displays a proliferation of commercial signage; and
- The depot frontage walls and railings are painted in garish blue.

3.10.3. The warehouse/former electricity substation on the corner of Flat Iron Square (54-58 Union Street)

- Has a blank frontage created by infilling of window openings which creates a dead frontage to the space; and
- Is in a prominent location, being visible from both directions along Union Street.

3.10.4. The Timber yard, Redcross Way/Union Street

- Has profiled metal sheeting on the boundary with Redcross Gardens which creates an unattractive edge;
- Displays an unattractive frontage to Redcross Way; and
- Has open-sided storage which is prominent along Union Street.

The following sites are currently vacant and detract from the character of the area as follows:

3.10.5. Site at the Junction of Union Street/Redcross Way

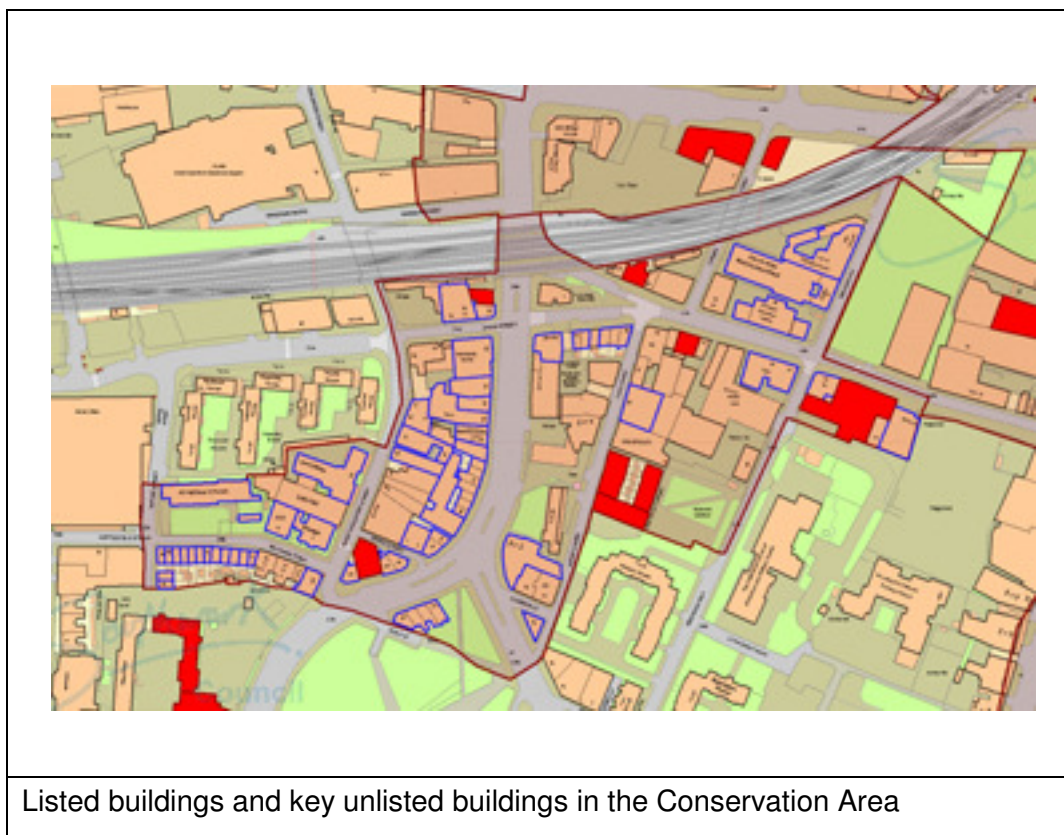
- Creates a lack of enclosure to the street resulting from a large prominent gap in the frontage along Union Street and Redcross Way.

3.10.6. Throughout the study area the quality of the paving is poor. The materials – a variety of concrete, tarmac and flags – occur in a random patchwork and detract from the overall appearance of the public realm.

3.10.7. Generally within the public realm there is a lack of co-ordination in the provision of street furniture, a typical example of which can be seen at the junction of Pepper Street and Copperfield Street. There are four different types of modern bollard, in different colours and materials, and two different types of street light. This adds visual clutter to the street and detracts from the overall appearance of the streetscape in the area.

3.10.8. There are also parts of the study area where elements such as road signs, belisha beacons and street lamps contribute to the visual clutter and detract from the appearance and character of the area.

4. Audit



4.1. Listed Buildings and Features

4.1.1. All listed buildings in the Union Street Conservation Area are Grade II. The following provides a brief summary of the listing descriptions.

4.1.2. The following listed buildings are located within the Union Street Conservation Area:

- Nos. 31-37 Union Street

Originally a terrace of four, three storey, houses built in the early nineteenth century; later shop fronts have been added. The frontages have three bays, and a similar parapet level. No. 31 has Doric columns supporting the front facade. No. 33 Union Street has recently undergone extensive refurbishment.

- Nos. 59 and 61 Union Street

These properties comprise a recently renovated early nineteenth century shop and house with an original shop front and an archway though to a rear yard via double gates.

- Nos. 62 and 64 Union Street

Three storey houses dating from circa 1835 with mid nineteenth century shop fronts. Having been on the Buildings at Risk Register, they are now undergoing refurbishment to provide an appropriate backdrop to Flat iron Square.

- No. 52 Southwark Bridge Road

Three storeys recently refurbished Georgian house with three bays and frontage railings.

- The Borough Welsh Congregational Chapel

The listing description describes this building, which was built in 1872-3, as “a remarkable well preserved example, both inside and out, of a Welsh Chapel of the Valleys.”

- Nos. 1-6 Redcross Cottages, Redcross Way

These six cottages, designed by Elijah Hoole, were built in 1887 and display an idiosyncratic picturesque style. These cottages, together with Nos. 1 to 8 Ayres Street make up an interesting group. They are the embodiment of Octavia Hill’s belief in the provision of civilised domestic environments for the working class. They starkly contrasted in scale and character with the tenement blocks then provided for social housing.

- No. 8 Bishop’s Hall and No. 8a George Bell House, Ayres Street

Formerly Redcross hall, this Arts and Crafts community building was also designed by Elijah Hoole and built between 1887 and 1890. It is now used as a studio with an office and flat to the Ayres Street frontage.

- Nos. 1-6 Whitecross Cottages, Ayres Street

Six idiosyncratic Arts and Crafts style cottages designed by Elijah Hoole and built in 1890.

4.2. Key Unlisted Buildings and Building Groups

4.2.1. The following are amongst the buildings and building groups that are notable but not listed:

- Union Hall, 27-29 Union Street – Mentioned in the County of London survey, but not in Cherry and Pevsner, this building was opened in 1781 to house meetings of the justices of the County of Surrey.
- St. Saviour’s House, 39-41 Union Street – Dated 1911, two and a half storey with mansard roof, built in a Tudor style with large windows with stone jambs and mullions.
- The Ragged School, 47-49 Union Street – Built in 1907, this former mansion hall and boy’s club is built in red brick with a blue brick plinth and stone quoins, banding and dentil cornice.
- St. Saviour’s parochial and National Schools, Union Street – Built in 1908, this two-storey building, which features a roof-top playground, is described by Cherry and Pevsner as “in a cheerful neo-Georgian” style.
- Church of the Most Precious Blood – Built to the designs of F.A. Walters in 1891-2, this Roman Catholic Church is of a Romanesque style with a notable large circular window to its frontage on O’Meara Street. The adjacent Presbytery is also a notable building.

- Warehouse Buildings including the Boot and Flogger public house, 10-20 Redcross Way – Nineteenth century red brick warehouse building. Built in Flemish bond with blue brick banding, terracotta dentil cornice and stone heads. Iron winching brackets and hanging sign.
- The Vicarage and Church Hall to All Hallows Church, Copperfield Street - Late C19/early C20 2-storey house built in the Arts & Crafts style.
- Remains of All Hallows Church, Pepper Street/Copperfield Street – Designed by George Gilbert Scott junior and built in 1879-80, this church was gutted during the Second World War. Only the northern part was incorporated into a new building designed by T.F. Ford in 1957. The site of much of the former church now forms a pleasant garden.
- Winchester Cottages, Copperfield Street – Arts and Crafts influenced, two storey, London stock brick, with red brick detailing.
- Bricklayer's Society Hall, 58 Southwark Bridge Road – In a neo-classical style, notable for the intricate use of brick detailing.
- 56 Southwark Bridge Road was designed as St. Saviours Public Library by John Johnson in 1893 and is constructed in white Suffolk bricks and Beer Stone dressings.
- Warehouse buildings, 37-39 and 45 Great Guildford Street and 60-66 Southwark Bridge Road – Four storey warehouse buildings with decorative panels.
- Railway Bridge over Southwark Bridge Road - 1860s. On the south side a large lattice girder spans between stock bridge abutments with bracketed stone cornices. On the north side the span is shorter and is spanned by a plate girder between stock brick, stone-corniced abutments.

4.3. Trees and planting

- 4.3.1. Due to the dense urban scale of the Conservation Area, trees are not a key feature of the character. There are however, a few mature trees such as that on the corner of Union Street and Redcross Way; and within Flat Iron Square that provide visual landmarks and are therefore important features within the streetscene.

4.4. Potential sites

- 4.4.1. Sites within the Conservation Area that would benefit from sensitive enhancement are:
- Warehouse at 10-20 Redcross Way – unsightly graffiti on ground floor elevation
 - The warehouse/former electricity substation on the corner of Flat Iron Square, 54-58 Union Street – blank facade that contributes to the lack of active uses in the square;
 - 60-79 Union Street fronting flat iron square – shop fronts do not contribute positively to the setting of the Conservation Area and properties above in need of refurbishment;
 - Former Fox and Hounds pub, 108 Great Guildford Street – commercial property at ground floor in need of refurbishment; and
 - 131-137 Southwark Bridge Road – ground floor Victorian shop fronts in need of refurbishment.

1.1.2. Sites directly adjacent to the Conservation Area that would benefit from sensitive enhancement are:

- Pepper Street elevation of All Hallows' Church – barbed wire at parapet level and miscellaneous metal railings to the back;
- Marlborough Playground, 11-25 Union Street – unsightly industrial site with open metal railings fronting Union Street; and
- Side of Bishop's Hall – hard surfacing in derelict condition with rusting metal gate on Ayres Street.

4.5. Proposed extensions to the Conservation Area

The following areas have a significantly positive historic character and contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area. The urban grain of the areas adjacent to the existing properties within the Conservation Area is larger as a result of extensive redevelopment. Despite this, the difference in character is however a feature of the Union Street/Southwark Bridge Road area and these areas therefore merit a designated place.

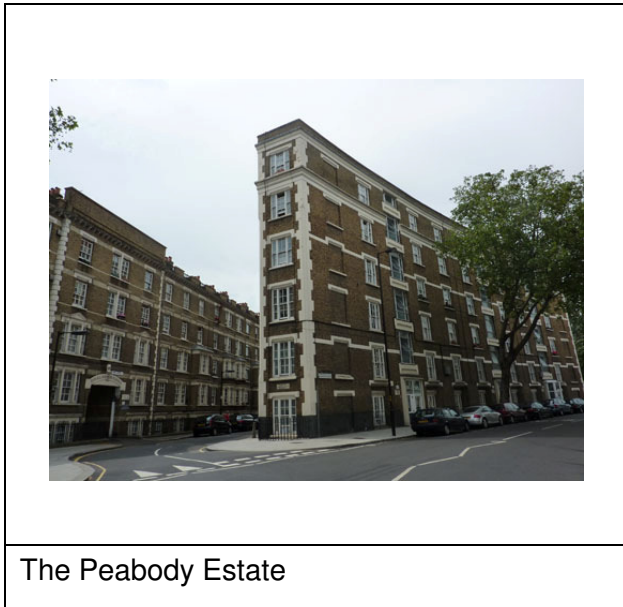
4.5.1. 25, Copperfield Street and former London Fire Brigade building

- The two storey building at the south-western junction of Copperfield Street and Pepper Street is a continuation of the low-rise character of the Winchester Cottages. The proposed Conservation Area extension could include the Grade II Listed Fire Brigade Building just to the south, thereby contributing to the preservation of the urban context in this area.



4.5.2. The Peabody Estate, Marshalsea Road and Mint Street Gardens

- The 5 storey Douglas Buildings and 6 storey Ilfracombe Flats are of a very consistent character that defines the townscape in this area. The area abuts the newly refurbished Mint Street Gardens and includes a short terrace of dwellings at 85-61 Mint Street that seem to be converted commercial properties from the shop front typology at ground floor level.



4.5.3. Flats, Great Guildford Street

- This group of seven blocks of flats on the corner of Union Street and Great Guildford Street were constructed in 1937-8 for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The group has a consistent, well preserved character and is a very good example of social housing of the time, featuring high quality brick detailing. Cherry and Pevsner note that these flats “designed by E. Armstrong – are more generous in their internal planning than most contemporary local authority housing, and unusual for their date in the way in which the lower north range is stepped back along the line of the road.” Behind it are parallel higher east and west ranges.

5. Guidelines

5.1. Introduction

Purpose of this guidance section

- 5.1.1. This section of the report draws out from the appraisal those themes that are essential to the Conservation Area's historical character, to which new development and improvement should pay heed. It is not intended to provide a perspective methodology for new design in the area or to exclude innovation.
- 5.1.2. It should also be noted that architectural style, in terms of the design of elevations, selection of materials, detailing and so on, is only part of the concern. Equally important are townscape issues of mass, overall form, building placement relative to the public realm, creation and presentation of views and vistas, quality of boundary treatments, and visual impacts of utility areas such as parking, servicing and site access.
- 5.1.3. In the Union Street Conservation Area the main development pressures relate to changes of use of buildings, redevelopment of vacant sites and the renovation and re-use of architecturally valuable, but currently redundant, buildings. There should be no objection in principle to good new building design in the Conservation Area in contemporary styles and the following guidance seeks to promote modern design of quality, and to preserve and reflect the historical character of the area.

Consulting the Council

- 5.1.4. The Council's conservation officer should be consulted prior to undertaking any alterations to the exterior of buildings within the Conservation Area and it is likely that planning permission and /or Conservation Area consent to demolish will be required for most significant works. Where a building is listed, there are stricter controls on what the owner can and cannot do. Most works to a listed building, whether internal or external, will require listed building consent where they are considered to affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building. Replacement of listed structures will usually prove unacceptable, and replacement of unlisted structures will normally only be entertained where existing buildings do not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the proposal can be shown to positively preserve or enhance that character and appearance. If unauthorised work is carried out the Council can enforce against it.
- 5.1.5. The following guidance provides some indication of the most appropriate approach to common problems and development pressures within the area. It is always wise to seek advice from the Council's planning and conservation officers before considering any building work.

5.2. Development form and urban morphology

- 5.2.1. Renewal of the area is required through the redevelopment, alteration and renovation of buildings. In some cases poor development in relatively recent times will give the opportunity for redevelopment that can respond more sensitively to the special character of the Conservation Area. New development should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area.

Street and plot patterns

5.2.2. It is important that the overall form of development remains in keeping with the morphological characteristics of the area. The urban grain and massing of the Conservation Area is key to its character and any change must consider the basic principles that have determined it. As the appraisal discusses, the morphology is a result of the long historical development of the place, thereby making the diverse building forms and styles a key feature, albeit in keeping with the overall character of the Conservation Area.

5.2.3. Development can therefore respond by:

- Maintaining the established or historic building line on the street – in most of the Conservation Area this means building on the boundary line between the plot and the street;
- Keeping utility areas behind the street frontage, accessed from the rear or through narrow passages under and between buildings – this includes car parking, garaging, service areas and private amenity space;
- Designing facades to echo the narrow module of the traditional building plot, and respecting the predominant building height and massing of the street in question.

Building form

5.2.4. The common building forms in the Conservation Area also determine the way development and changes can take place. Through much of the area the dominant building type is 3/4 storey buildings, having a commercial area at ground floor and residential properties above. This generates a visual rhythm in the street or relatively narrow frontages, 5 to 6 metres, that gives a strong verticality to elevations, further emphasised by the strong horizontality of the ground floor shop front. Particular characteristics which should be observed in conversion and new design are:

- Heights of three or four storeys and not less than two – in each situation buildings should remain within the range of heights of the block of buildings in which it is sited;
- Roof lines are typically seen as parapets behind which the roof structure is not visible from the street level. Extensions and changes to the basic roof form are generally unacceptable even where set back from parapet lines;
- Relatively narrow plot widths that give strong verticality to elevations are important in maintaining the visual rhythm of development blocks; and
- Regular residential patterns of fenestration and a strong verticality in upper floors.

New design in the Conservation Area

- 5.2.5. The commercial character of parts of the Conservation Area, such as Flat Iron Square and Union Street, places particular pressure on its appearance. Shop fronts are the most sensitive element, and are often the subject of poor design or alteration. Section 5.2.7 sets out guidance for the design of new shop fronts, and improvements whenever they can be made.
- 5.2.6. Frequently upper floors fall into disuse or change to office uses. New uses for upper floors are to be encouraged, but the residential scale and details of upper level elevations should always be retained. Should redevelopments be considered, it is important that upper floors are designed to the same scale, even though the planned use is not for living accommodation.

Shop front design

5.2.7. The objective is that shop fronts and advertisements should harmonise with and enhance the character of the street as well as the buildings in which they are contained; it is not the intention to inhibit imaginative and sensitive design, but to offer a general guide illustrating solutions that have been found acceptable. Non-shopping commercial frontages, as well as retail shops, pose similar problems at ground floor level. The following design principles relating to shop fronts should be adopted:

- Some fine old commercial fronts should be preserved in their entirety.
- Wherever a framework of pilasters, columns, piers, fascias or frieze remains, this should be preserved and the new shop front inserted within it. Important architectural or historic features of the building should not be altered, defaced or obscured.
- Any new fronts should be contained within the width of the building and if any premises occupy more than one existing building, the front should be divided to reflect the divisions of these buildings and the traditional plot sizes of the street.
- In traditional Georgian, Victorian or Edwardian buildings with regular window openings, the front should be made up of traditional elements: pilasters and frieze, incorporating a fascia. Within this framework the window should be constructed of mainly traditional forms, with a brick, panelled, or rendered stall riser at least 45cm high, materials should be mostly traditional: shiny, reflective material or lurid colouring should be avoided.
- In new buildings that include shop or commercial fronts some of these principles can be adapted: architectural elements of the building should be brought to ground, with a firm frame defining the shop front or the area of commercial frontage, at ground level. The traditional appearance of shop fronts at ground floor should be continued.
- Where a new building occupies more than one original plot, the building itself and the ground floor frontage should be subdivided to reflect the width of the individual plots.

Advertisements

5.2.8. Signage is a key component of shop fronts and the shopping street.

- In a traditional building, the existing fascia or a timber fascia is most appropriate. Fascia signs should convey the name or trade of the premises and should not carry any extraneous advertising. Fascia signs might be externally lit from a concealed source or other discreet form of lighting.
- The preferred form of projecting sign is a traditional hanging sign, possibly externally illuminated. Fascia or projecting signs that consist of large internally illuminated boxes are not acceptable, especially where they obscure architectural features or are too visually dominant for the overall elevation.
- The use of upper floors for businesses should not be allowed to result in a proliferation of signs on the elevation: however, simple lettering perhaps on a screen behind the window or affixed direct to the window pane, need not spoil the elevation.

5.2.9. The standard company signs of national retail and service businesses may not be appropriate either to individual buildings or the setting of the conservation area. Suitability for the building and the conservation area is considered more important than uniformity between branches of a firm, and company motifs can usually be successfully adapted with a little thought.

5.3. Public Realm

5.3.1. In this context the public realm includes everything visible from publicly accessible areas, including both street spaces and any areas up to the front elevations of buildings. The essential components of the public realm that development and improvement should address are:

- Boundaries and frontages that define its edges;
- The surfaces and design of the space itself
- Trees, street furniture and other artefacts in the space.

Boundaries

5.3.2. In most parts of the Conservation Area, the boundary of the public realm is the building façade, and the quality of design is of paramount importance. Interesting places are generally characterised by “active edges”, i.e. where there is stimulus and interaction between the public realm and buildings. This can be by direct access or through visual connection (windows, and shop fronts for example).

Ground Surfaces

5.3.3. There are no comprehensive enhancement schemes for ground surfaces in the Conservation Area at present. The original materials are now seen in just a few locations with for example the natural flagstone pedestrian walkway adjacent to Redcross Cottages.

Trees and street furniture

5.3.4. A more co-ordinated approach to the design and siting of street furniture, such as bus shelters, lamp standards and highway signs, is required. Simple designs appropriate to the Conservation Area's heritage, whilst avoiding "Victoriana" clichés, would be appropriate.

5.4. Improvements and repairs

Materials

5.4.1. Choice and use of materials can have a significant effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is therefore important that materials are appropriate for the building and for the Conservation Area. Care should be taken to ensure that original materials are retained whenever possible, and if replacements are necessary because of decay or damage, materials are chosen to match the originals as closely as possible in both appearance and performance.

5.4.2. The use of natural, traditional materials will be encouraged and expected particularly on listed buildings. Artificial modern materials such as concrete tiles, artificial slates, UPVC windows etc. generally look out of place, and may have differing behavioural characteristics to natural materials. Some materials, such as concrete tiles, can lead to problems with the building's structure as their weight may exceed the loading for which the roof trusses and internal walls were designed. Where such inappropriate materials have been used in the past, their replacement with more sympathetic traditional materials and detailing, where possible, will be encouraged.

Maintenance

5.4.3. Repair works can prove costly and may require authorisation, which can cause delays. It is therefore far better to ensure that regular maintenance is undertaken, thus preventing unnecessary decay and damage and the resultant costs and problems. Works such as the regular opening of woodwork and timber, clearing out of debris in rainwater pipes and gutters, cutting back of vegetation in close proximity to buildings, repointing of failed mortar and re-fixing of loose roof slates are all in themselves relatively minor tasks that will not require authorisation but which may lead to much more complex and expensive works if left unattended.

Windows and Doors

5.4.4. Where original elements exist they should whenever possible be retained in situ and repaired. All external joinery should be painted, which is the traditional finish. Stained or varnished timber finishes are inappropriate in the Conservation Area. Most window frames are painted white, although white may not have been their original colour, however repainting in garish colours would be inappropriate.

5.4.5. At the same time, there is the opportunity to introduce more colour, in the repainting of doors, shop fronts and retained mechanical features. Subdued and darker shades of red, green or blue can provide a highlighting theme, without being garish.

5.4.6. Replacement windows to listed buildings need to match the original glazing bars and detail of the originals. Where the existing windows or doors are however later alterations which determinally affect the character or appearance of a building, the Council will consider

their replacement with appropriate traditional design. The use of modern materials such as aluminium or UPVC is inappropriate and not acceptable on historic buildings.

Roofs

5.4.7. Where possible, original roof coverings should be retained and if necessary repaired with slate or tiles as appropriate in order to match the existing. Where re-roofing is unavoidable because of deterioration of the existing roof covering or inappropriate later works, the use of natural slate or clay tiles as appropriate will usually be required. The use of more modern materials such as concrete tiles and artificial slate is unacceptable, and their greater weight can lead to damage and deterioration of the roof structure if inappropriately used. Natural slates have a better appearance and weather gradually and evenly over time: most artificial slates weather badly with streaking and leaching of colour and adverse effects on the overall appearance of the building.

5.4.8. Where they exist, original chimney stacks and pots should always be retained and repaired if necessary. The reinstatement of appropriately designed replacement chimney pots where these have been lost will be encouraged.

Brickwork

5.4.9. The painting or rendering of original untreated brickwork should be avoided and is usually considered unacceptable. Where damaged bricks are to be replaced or new work undertaken, bricks should be carefully selected to match those existing in texture, size and colour and should be laid in an appropriate bond to match the existing.

5.4.10. The most dominant visual components of the brick façade are the bricks themselves, rather than the pointing. Traditional bricks were slightly larger than metric bricks and were often laid in softer lime based mortar in a thinner bed, which reduced the appearance of the joints relative to the bricks. Repointing should only be undertaken where necessary to prevent further damage to a building's structure and should be kept to a minimum. Usually, lime based mortar mix no stronger than 1:1:6 (cement: lime: sand) is recommended and this should be coloured with sand to match the original mix. Joints should be flush or slightly recessed (not weather struck or raised) finished neatly and cleanly with the mortar brushed back to expose the edges of adjacent bricks.

5.4.11. Cleaning of brickwork is a specialist task, which may dramatically alter the appearance of a building. If undertaken incorrectly cleaning may lead to permanent damage to the bricks and ultimately the structure of a building. Advice should be sought from the Council before attempting such a task.

Stucco and render

5.4.12. It is of particular importance that stucco render is kept in good repair and that regular maintenance takes place. Stucco is lime based, and it is important that any repairs are made in material to match, taking care to avoid the use of hard cement renders. If the surface is damaged, stucco may deteriorate quickly through water ingress possibly leading to further damage to the structure behind. Early localised repairs of the problem areas are usually the most appropriate approach when damage occurs. Major repair works can be expensive and difficult to carry out and are best undertaken by experts.

- 5.4.13. Stucco requires regular repainting for appearance and to maintain weather resistance, taking care not to obliterate decorative features. The stucco would originally have been a stone colour, and paint should be chosen carefully with this in mind and to respect the unified character of the area. Listed Building consent is required where painting significantly alters the appearance of a listed building and the use of unusual or contrasting colours (e.g. to highlight decorative details) is unacceptable. Generally the use of the colours *buttermilk*, *parchment*, *ivory* and *magnolia* are acceptable under British Standard Colours: BS 4800, these are BS 10B15, BS 08B17 and BS 08B15 respectively. Use of a gloss or eggshell finish which allows the masonry to 'breathe' is recommended and will not require consent. Textured or highly glossy paints and '*brilliant white*' should be avoided.
- 5.4.14. Where features such as capitals, pilasters and porches have been lost, the Council will encourage their reinstatement using traditional materials following the design and detailing of those originals remaining on other properties.

Extensions

- 5.4.15. Where rear extensions are proposed, they should normally be no more than one storey in height, be low key in design and as unobtrusive as possible. Full width rear extensions will normally prove unacceptable. Extensions should be clearly subservient to the main part of a building and not add appreciably to the building's bulk. In some cases it may not be possible to devise an acceptable scheme to extend a property, although each case will be judged on its individual merits.

6. Useful information

General advice

General advice concerning works in conservation areas and the planning process can be obtained by visiting the Southwark Council website at

http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200023/design_conservation_and_archaeology

Useful telephone numbers

General Planning Enquiries	0207 525 5438
Conservation & Design Team	0207 525 5448
Planning Enforcement	0207 525 5419
Building Control	0207 525 5582
Tree Protection Officer	020 7525 2090

Other useful contacts

- English Heritage
0870 333 1181 <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>
- The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
0207 377 1644 www.spab.org.uk
- The Victorian Society
0208 994 1019 <http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk>
- The Council for British Archaeology
0190 467 1417 <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/>
- Ancient Monuments Society
0207 236 3934 <http://www.ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk/>
- The Georgian Group
087 1750 2936 <http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk/docs/home/index.php>
- The Twentieth Century Society
020 7250 3857 <http://www.c20society.org.uk/>

Further reading

- Ashurst, J and N – *Practical Building Conservation, Vols. 1 to 5* (1988)
- Brereton, C – *The Repair of Historic Buildings: Advice on Principles and Methods* (English Heritage, 1991)
- Cherry, B and Pevsner, N – *The Buildings of England, London 2: South* (1983)
- Department for Communities and Local Government - *Planning Policy Statement 5, Planning for the Historic Environment* [2010)
- English Heritage – *Streets for All* (2000)
- Institute of Historic Building Conservation [IHBC] – *A Stitch in Time: Maintaining your Property makes Good Sense and Saves Money* (2002)
- London Borough of Southwark – *Neighbourhood History No. 4: The Story of Walworth* (1993)
- Reilly, L – *Southwark: an Illustrated History* (London Borough of Southwark, 1998)
- *Survey of London, Vol. 25 – St. George's Fields, the parishes of St. George the Martyr, Southwark and St. Mary Newington* (London County Council, 1955).